

## Message Text

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ACTION BNDE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9046

UNCLAS PARIS 9792

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: SNAR

SUBJ: FRENCH PRESS AND NARCOTICS, MARCH 16- APRIL 6

DEPT PASS BNDD FOR PRICE

1. FRENCH PRESS INTEREST IN PAST THREE WEEKS FOCUSED MAINLY ON (1) SHOWING OF TELEVISION FILM " LES ROUTES DE L' OPIUM" FOLLOWED BY PANEL DISCUSSION IN WHICH BNDD DIRECTOR PAUL KNOGHT AND FRANCH COMMISSAIRE LE MOUEL FACED TOUGH QUESTIONS FROM FIVE SPECIALIZED JOURNALISTS MARCH 26; AND (2) GANG WAR SHOOTINGS IN MARSEILLE FOLLOWING DISCOVERY HEROIN LABORATORY MARCH 30.

2. FILM WAS MADE BY TWO YOUNG REPORTERS, CATHERINE LAMOUR AND MICHEL LAMBERTI, MOSTLY IN PASHTOUNISTAN, A TRIBAL TERRITORY BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN WHOSE SEVEN MILLION INHABITANTS GROW POPPIES AND PRODUCE 200 TONS OF OPIUM YEARLY. LOCAL TRADESMAN IN FILM SAID HE CAN SHIP TON OF OPIUM TO PARIS BUT IT WILL TAKE MONTHS AND COST MILLION DOLLARS. SMUGGLING TECHNIQUE EXPLAINED IN DETAIL IN FILM WAS RELATIVELY EASY BUT EXPENSIVE SINCE BASED PRIMARILY ON BRIBING OFFICIALS ALL THE WAY THROUGH TO SMALL PERSIAN GULF PORTS WHERE CARGO IS EMBARKED. IN INTERVIEW THAT FOLLOWED FILM. JUDICIOUS RESTRAINT OF KNIGHT AND LE MOUEL PRODUCED DISAPPOINTED PRESS COMMENT BY CRITICS WHO HAD HOPED FOR SOMETHING MORE FOR INTERVIEWERS TO SHOOT AT.

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3. MARSEILLE " GANG WAR" HAS BEEN GIVEN EXTENSIVE COVERAGE EVEN IN SERIOUS PAPERS THROUGHOUT PAST WEEK. ALTHOUGH POLICE MAINTAINED THEY HAD NO CLUE RELATING GANG EXECUTIONS WITH NARCOTICS, PRESS A ADOPTED OPPOSITE VIEW BECAUSE OF RECORD OF SEVERAL OF VICTIMS, ESPECIALLY JOSEPH LOMINI, ALIAS JO LE TOREADOR, AND ALBERT BISTONI, ALIAS AGA KHAN, FRIEND OF RECENTLY ARRESTED JEAN- BAPTISTE CROCE, WIDELY CONSIDERED AS BANKROLLER OF FRENCH CONNECTION.

4. PRESS ALSO NOTED THAT TANAGRA BAR MANSLAUGHTER TOOK PLACE IN WAKE OF DISCOVERY BY MARSEILLE POLICE OF HEROIN LABORATORY AND OF ARREST OF CHRISTIAN SIMONPIERI, NEPHEW OF ANGE SIMONPIERI, CURRENTLY SERVING FIVE- YEAR PRISON SENTENCE. COMMUNIST HUMANITE SAID " BIG WHEELS" ARE BECOMING FIDGETY BECAUSE RECENT FRENCH LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS DEPRIVED THEM OF THEIR SAFEST POLITICAL AND POLICE PROTECTION. ANOTHER THEORY SUBSEQUENTLY PLAYED UP BY SENSATIONAL PRESS WAS THAT GANG WAR IS AIMED AT ESTABLISHING ANOTHER " GODFATHER". THIS THEORY WAS CHALLENGED BY LE MONDE WHICH SPOKE OF " REVOLT OF THE GODSONS," EAGER TO ACT ON THEIR OWN AND NO LONGER WILLING TO SUBMIT TO A " GODFATHER." IRWIN

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